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ABSTRACT

Serving primarily as a policy group for local Rural Development Panels, the North Carolina Rural Development Committee's major objective for 1976 is to work with local leaders, private businesses and governmental agencies at all levels in planning and implementing comprehensive rural development programs. Specifically, the Committee's objectives are to: (1) create more jobs; (2) increase the level of income; (3) provide more and better training opportunities; (4) develop better delivery systems for community services; and (5) improve the quality of environment for residents in small towns and rural areas. Major rural development activities planned for 1976 focus on: (1) Training Workshops (on health, housing, site planning, and the State Land Policy Act); (2) Environmental Improvements (land-use planning/control, solid waste disposal, agricultural waste utilization and disposal, sedimentation control, family and community sewer disposal); (3) Improving Health Care (workshops, educational material on preventive health care, a pilot program, a health directory, slide-tape); (4) Improving Housing (adoption and enforcement of building codes, regulations, etc); (5) Economic Development (stimulation of industrial growth, tourism, and agricultural income); (6) Other Activities (manpower development, community facilities, resource conservation/development, and youth involvement). (JC)

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PLAN OF WORK

FOR

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

IN

NORTH CAROLINA

July 1, 1975 - June 30, 1976

Human Resource Development

Economic Development

Developing Community Services

Natural Resource Conservation and Development

Improving Quality of Environment

NORTH CAROLINA RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Coordinator, Center
for Rural Resource
Development

RC 009 113

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1975

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

NORTH CAROLINA RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FISCAL YEAR 1976

Situation and Emerging Problems

Diverse and far-reaching economic and social changes are occurring in North Carolina which have important implications for rural development. The national economic recession has made the longer range problem of a declining rural economy much more severe and widespread. The construction, textiles, apparel, furniture and electrical appliance industries have been especially adversely affected and many small towns and rural areas which depend heavily on these industries have been experiencing unemployment rates of 20 percent or more. The state unemployment rate rose from about 4 percent in March, 1974 to 11.8 percent in March, 1975 and remained over 9 percent in June. Manufacturing employment declined by 87,000 or 11 percent during the period March, 1974 to March, 1975, reaching its lowest level since May, 1971. Another aspect of the problem of rural economic development is that industries are faced with a shortage of natural gas and the threat of losing this source of heat and power if winter temperatures drop below normal. Rising gasoline prices result in disproportionate increases in costs for rural residents who commute longer distances to employment.

The above economic conditions vividly portray the need for additional jobs and sources of income within commuting distance of rural residents. They are needed for more balanced growth, to reduce out-migration and to make incomes of rural families more comparable to those in urban areas. A key ingredient will be to increase the levels of educational attainment and occupational skills of the labor force.

Better community facilities and services are needed to stimulate and support rural economic growth and provide a better quality of living for rural residents. The intensity and magnitude of the problem are great. More information, financial assistance and greater efforts are needed to improve rural housing, health, water and sewer systems, recreation, solid waste disposal, communication and transportation and other important community services. There is a special need for planning and developing larger and more unified water systems for two or more communities, a county or two or more closely interrelated counties. Larger and more unified water systems might be expected to reduce per capita costs of water, enhance the potential for economic growth and be used as a positive tool in land-use planning and guiding orderly community growth. Better planning and more rapid, centrally located communication systems for fire protection are needed on a county or multi-county basis to assure coverage for all residents, quicker and more effective service and potentially lower insurance rates.

Maintaining and enhancing environmental quality, the responsible use of land, water, forest, marine and other natural resources and protecting and preserving the more productive land for agriculture are critical and widespread problems in the state. Rapid increases in rural nonfarm population are intensifying rural-urban interfacing problems. Rural nonfarm population in the state during the decade 1960-70 increased 24 percent as compared to an increase in total population of 12 percent. In 41 counties rural nonfarm population increased more than one-third during the decade of the sixties. These population patterns appear in the form of leap-frogging subdivisions, strip developments along major highways and dense development patterns in tourist resorts in the coastal and

and mountain areas. They result in increasingly more competition for land and other natural resources. Competition for land exists among agricultural uses, forestry enterprises, recreation interests, industrial development activities, highway purposes, housing developments, shopping centers and other uses. If unguided, the actions of individuals and businesses in an effort to maximize returns or benefits for themselves often lead to mixed land uses, misuse of land, pollution of individual and municipal water supplies, degradation in natural beauty, open spaces and other natural resources, failure of individual family waste systems and a host of related environmental problems.

Implementation of the Coastal Area Management Act passed in 1974 by the State Legislature which requires the 20 coastal counties to prepare land-use plans by 1976 suggests the need for educational information and technical assistance to help local leaders identify problems, evaluate alternative courses of action and be knowledgeable of and effectively use the tools available to them in achieving the goals which they have established and fostering orderly community growth. There is an equal need for assistance in developing and implementing a statewide land classification system under the State Land Policy Act. A special need exists for assistance in classifying rural areas and developing policies that will lead to orderly growth in rural areas, including protection of agricultural land.

Objectives

The major objective of the North Carolina Rural Development Committee is to work with local leaders, private businesses and governmental agencies at all levels in planning and implementing comprehensive rural development programs. The State Committee is cognizant of the conditions and problems

of rural people and seeks through cooperative planning and action to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for rural people. More specifically, the State Committee's objectives are to create more jobs, increase the level of income, provide more and better training opportunities, develop better quality and a better delivery system for community services and improve the quality of environment for residents in small towns and rural areas. The Committee serves primarily as a policy group for local Rural Development Panels, as an instrument for formulating strategies, marshaling resources and planning programs for rural development, and as a means of coordinating rural development programs within the state and assisting in coordinating those between the state and federal governments.

Three State Task Forces on Rural Environment, Health and Housing assist the State Committee in achieving these objectives. These Task Forces are actively involved in numerous rural development activities and serve as a means of improving interagency understanding, communication and cooperation.

The 100 County Rural Development Panels serve as the nuclei for planning and implementing rural development programs at the local level. The County Panels have an average of 17 members including local representatives of USDA agencies, education, labor, social services, health, county planning boards, local government, multi-county planning regions and other agencies and groups directly involved in rural development.

Membership

Membership of the North Carolina Rural Development Committee has increased from representatives of five USDA agencies at the initial meeting in December, 1969, to the present membership of 19. Currently, the membership includes five representatives from state government, two representatives from A&T State University, the Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, a representative of the Agricultural Research Service, two youth representatives, a representative of the Multi-County Regional Commissions and a representative of each USDA agency.

Major Rural Development Activities Planned for Fiscal Year 1976

The major rural development activities planned by the State Committee for 1975 and 1976 are:

1. Training Workshops - A series of six, three-day Training Workshops are being planned for October and November on improving rural health, rural housing, site planning for rural housing and on the State Land Policy Act, especially as it relates to rural areas. The Workshops are being planned and will be conducted by the three State Task Forces on Rural Environment, Health and Housing in cooperation with Extension Specialists in economics, home economics, sociology, soils and biological and agricultural engineering at N. C. State University. It is anticipated that about 125 members of County Rural Development Panels, representatives of Multi-County Planning Regions, and representatives of local health, planning boards, education and voluntary development groups will participate in each of the six Workshops.

The more specific objectives of the Workshops are:

A. To help the above local leaders and professional workers better understand the basic concepts and principles in rural housing site selection, including soil characteristics, water supply, waste

disposal and landscaping. The publication on Rural Housing Site Planning in North Carolina prepared by the State Housing Task Force will serve as the principal reference.

B. To discuss current issues on rural housing including energy conservation measures, building codes and financing.

C. To discuss provisions of the State Land Policy Act, especially land classification, land use issues, citizen participation and policy as they relate to rural areas.

D. To discuss alternative means of improving primary health care and educational programs in which County Rural Development Panels and other local groups may provide assistance.

2. Environment - Improving the quality of environment, especially land-use planning in rural areas, is one of the foremost rural development problems and probably will remain to be throughout the seventies. The State Task Force on Rural Environment and County Rural Development Panels serve as the major framework for providing educational information and technical assistance to local leaders and government in small towns and rural areas and helping them plan and implement programs to cope with the environmental problems with which they are confronted. The State Task Force on Rural Environment assists the State Committee in (1) identifying environmental activities on which to focus, (2) suggesting strategies for organizing, planning and implementing environmental programs, (3) developing and disseminating information on alternative approaches and educational, financial and technical assistance available, (4) developing and conducting training programs for local leaders, Rural Development Panels, local Planning Boards and others directly involved in rural environmental problems and (5) serving as a means of developing better interagency understanding and cooperativeness and marshaling resources to solve rural environmental problems. The State Environmental Task Force consists of representatives from various private groups, state and federal agencies, local government and institutions of higher education.

Major environmental problems on which the State Committee and its Task Force on Rural Environment will focus in 1975 and 1976 are:

A. Land-use planning and control - Concentration of population in urban and suburban areas and strip developments between urban centers without proper planning and control measures result in mixed land uses,"leap-frogging" subdivisions, soil erosion, high costs of farm production, inefficient use of the fixed land resource and a general degradation in the quality of environment. Without proper planning and control measures, rural areas and small towns become the dumping grounds of solid wastes, haphazard subdivisions and conflicts between farmers and consumer-oriented rural nonfarm residents. Local Rural Development Panels can help inform the citizenry and local governments of the need for and importance of land-use planning and proper control measures and assist them in estimating future land requirements, evaluating soil capabilities and determining the effect of alternative control measures on future community growth and development. Special attention needs to be given to protecting and preserving the most productive land for agriculture and open spaces and encouraging countywide and regional planning in non-metropolitan areas. Efforts to provide assistance in preparing land-use plans in the Coastal Area will be continued.

Major land-use planning activities include:

(1) Plan and conduct training programs on major land-use issues and the State Land Policy Act for County Rural Development Panels, regional representatives and local leaders as enunciated above.

(2) Prepare educational materials on protection and preservation of agricultural land including alternatives available for guiding development in rural areas.

(3) Prepare publication on activities and assistance available from federal, state and private agencies and groups on land-use planning.

(4) Use educational packet on Coastal Zone Management to assist 20 coastal counties in preparing land-use plans.

(5) Provide educational information and assist the State Land Policy Council in evaluating alternative policies, developing a state land classification system and fostering local government and citizen understanding and participation in policy development and classifying land uses as a basis for more detailed preparation of local land-use plans.

(6) Work with state and local governments in efforts to accelerate soil surveys and the assembly and analysis of data needed for land-use planning.

B. Solid waste disposal - Continue assistance to local leaders and governing bodies in collection, recycling and disposal of solid wastes. More specific activities planned include:

(1) Prepare a brochure on types of materials that are recyclable, prices, collection points, schedules, separation and other information needed by local leaders.

(2) Work with League of Women Voters on distribution and use of skit on recycling.

(3) Continue to provide information on new techniques for disposing of solid wastes, site selection and maintenance, compliance requirements and financial assistance available.

C. Agricultural waste utilization and disposal - The major activity planned is to prepare a slide-tape set on problems and alternative means of managing and disposing of agricultural wastes. This will be used to supplement educational leaflets prepared in Fiscal Year 1974 on disposal of poultry, beef, dairy and swine wastes.

D. Sedimentation control - Sediment is one of the major sources of water pollution and the costs to society from erosion and sedimentation in municipal water supplies, overflow of streams and other costs continue to rise as population increases and becomes more concentrated near urban areas.

Major activities planned in Fiscal Year 1976 include:

(1) Assisting local contractors, developers and others involved in land disturbing activities in planning, evaluating and instigating alternative on-the-site sedimentation control measures.

(2) Assist local governments in developing ordinances to control erosion and sedimentation.

E. Family and community sewer disposal - Dense settlement in rural areas with soils having moderate to severe limitations for family sewer systems is becoming an increasingly important problem in North Carolina. Activities to cope with this problem will be continued including:

(1) Helping local leaders understand soil capabilities, emerging problems of individual family sewer systems in densely settled areas, alternative methods of disposing of family wastes and limitations of various systems.

(2) Help families understand how to better care for and maintain their sewer system.

3. Improving Rural Health Care - Rural areas in North Carolina are confronted with critical and widespread health problems. The problems appear in the form of: (1) inadequate and poor quality health facilities and services, (2) shortage of medical manpower (physicians, dentists, nurses and technicians) and (3) an inadequate health delivery system. A State Task Force on Rural Health assists the State Committee in: (1) identifying and analyzing rural health problems, (2) evaluating alternative systems of providing better health services for rural residents, (3) planning and implementing programs to improve the delivery of health services, (4) develop educational materials and training programs for use by local Rural Development Panels and voluntary groups and (5) serve as a means of developing better interagency communication, understanding and cooperativeness and marshaling resources to solve rural health problems.

Major activities planned by the State Task Force on Rural Health in Fiscal Year 1976 include:

A. Plan and conduct rural health component of six Training Workshops enunciated in an earlier section.

B. Prepare and disseminate educational material on preventive health care with emphasis on nutrition and dental care.

C. Select and work with pilot county on planning and initiating a unified, comprehensive health education program as a model for other counties.

D. Complete Chatham County Health Directory as a guide for use by other County Rural Development Panels in better informing the citizenry of health services available to them.

E. Use recently completed slide-tape set on Rural Health Centers and other educational materials to help local leaders better understand alternative ways of improving primary rural health care.

4. Improving Rural Housing - Although numerous public agencies and private groups at the state and local levels are striving to improve the quality and availability of rural housing in North Carolina, thousands of houses are substandard and a shortage of houses exists in many areas. The depressed economy, tight money and high interest rates make the housing problem more acute.

The State Task Force on Rural Housing serves as a means of assisting the State Rural Development Committee in planning and implementing programs to improve rural housing. Efforts to work with state and local governments, County Rural Development Panels and others to foster interagency communication and cooperation at the state and local levels will continue. Activities planned in Fiscal 1976 include:

A. Plan and conduct housing component of Training Workshops discussed earlier in the report. The publication on Site Selection for Rural Housing will be used as a major reference in helping County Rural Development Panels and other local groups more effectively assist local leaders and individual families in understanding factors to consider in selecting a home site; especially soil characteristics, capabilities in regard to waste disposal, water supply, erosion or drainage control and costs of preparing sites.

B. Work with local government in encouraging and assisting in the development of public policies to provide for orderly residential development and better quality housing through adoption and enforcement of building codes, inspections, subdivision regulations, health regulations and the like.

C. Work with low-income families in seeking to improve the quality of housing through remodeling, addition of screens, running water, bath and toilet facilities and other improvements.

D. Provide educational information and assist local leaders and individual families better understand alternative energy conservation measures and the potential for reducing costs of heating and cooling family dwellings.

E. Provide educational information and assist individual families and small local developers in understanding and securing housing financing assistance.

5. Economic Development - Rural incomes are lower than the average for North Carolina although the state ranks among the lower one-third in the nation. Major manufacturing industries in North Carolina were quite adversely affected by the national economic recession making the current problem much more severe. Rising fuel costs disproportionately affect rural families who commute longer distances to work and they need additional sources of income and better job opportunities to make them more comparable to those in urban areas. Many of the other activities planned for next year should help improve rural areas competitive position in attracting private industries. Activities planned for Fiscal 1976 include working cooperatively with state government, local development groups and private organizations in stimulating industrial growth and tourist development in small towns and rural areas and in increasing agricultural income. State and local rural development groups and agencies will assist in providing educational, financial and technical assistance to foster rural economic development and help evaluate the economic feasibility of potential rural businesses and industries.

6. Other Rural Development Activities

A. Manpower Development - Rural residents are in continuous need of job information, vocational guidance and occupational training. The needs are even greater in the current economic recessionary period. Not only is there a need for nonfarm occupational training, commercial farmers need skilled employees to operate, adjust and perform maintenance on farm machinery and equipment. Local Rural Development Panels and their agricultural representative on Area Manpower Committees can assist in meeting rural manpower development needs through making these needs known and getting them incorporated into Area Manpower Plans which collectively make up the State Manpower Plan, and providing information on recent federal programs to assist the unemployed. This activity will be conducted in close liaison with local Departments of Public Education, Community Colleges and Technical Institutes, Employment Security Commission and other agencies directly involved in Manpower Development.

B. Improving Community Facilities and Services - The State Committee, its three State Task Forces on Rural Environment, Health and Housing, and County Rural Development Panels will continue to help local leaders improve water systems, fire protection, recreation and other important facilities and services in small towns and rural communities in Fiscal 1976. More emphasis is being given to planning countywide or even regional water systems and fire protection.

C. Resource Conservation and Development Projects - Members of the State Committee and local Rural Development Panels will work with local leaders in planning and implementing Resource Conservation and Development Projects with emphasis on the conservation, development and wise use of natural resources.

D. Youth Involvement - At the state level officers of the two major rural youth organizations (4-H and FFA) serve as members of the State Committee. Efforts will be continued in Fiscal 1976 to involve more youth in working with County Rural Development Panels in planning and implementing local programs.